

§ 531.401

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range for the grade in which pay is being set, do not identify the lowest step rate that equals or exceeds the highest previous rate. Instead, identify the rate in the rate range that equals the highest previous rate unless that highest previous rate is below the range minimum or above the range maximum. If the highest previous rate is below the range minimum, identify the minimum rate (step 1) of the grade. If the highest previous rate is above the range maximum, identify the maximum rate (step 10) of the grade.

(2) In applying § 531.221(b) for an employee whose highest previous rate is a GS rate, the highest previous rate must be compared to the GS rate range for the grade in which pay is currently

being set, but which was in effect at the time the highest previous rate was earned. If the highest previous rate was earned while the current GS rate range was in effect, the rate identified under paragraph (c)(1) of this section is the maximum payable GS rate. Otherwise, based on the rate identified in paragraph (c)(1) of this section, the agency must determine the corresponding rate in the current GS rate range for the grade in which pay is currently being set. That corresponding rate is the maximum payable GS rate. If the highest previous rate was above the range minimum and below the range maximum, the corresponding rate in the current GS rate range must be derived as follows:

- Step A Find the difference between the employee's highest previous rate and the minimum rate for the GS rate range (for the employee's current grade) in effect at the time the highest previous rate was earned.
- Step B Find the difference between the maximum rate and the minimum GS rate for the rate range identified in step A. (If the GS maximum rate was not payable because of the EX level V pay limitation, use the uncapped maximum rate.)
- Step C Divide the result from step A by the result from step B. Carry this result to the seventh decimal place and truncate, rather than round, the result. This decimal factor represents the employee's relative position in the rate range.
- Step D Using the current GS rate range (for the employee's current grade), find the difference between the maximum rate and the minimum rate. (If the maximum GS rate was not payable because of the EX level V pay limitation, use the uncapped maximum GS rate.)
- Step E Multiply the result from step D by the factor derived under step C.
- Step F Add the result from step E to the minimum rate for the employee's current GS rate range and round to the next higher whole dollar. This rate is the maximum payable GS rate the agency may pay the employee (subject to the EX level V pay limitation).

(3) In applying § 531.221(c) for an employee whose highest previous rate is a special rate, the highest previous rate (after any geographic conversion) must be compared directly to the current highest applicable rate range for the employee's position of record and official worksite after reassignment. Thus, the rate identified under paragraph (c)(1) of this section is the maximum payable rate of basic pay.

[70 FR 31291, May 31, 2005, as amended at 73 FR 66153, Nov. 7, 2008]

Subpart C [Reserved]

**Subpart D—Within-Grade
Increases**

SOURCE: 46 FR 2319, Jan. 9, 1981, unless otherwise noted.

§ 531.401 Principal authorities.

The following are the principal authorities for the regulations in this subpart:

Office of Personnel Management

§ 531.403

(a) Section 2301(b)(3) of title 5, United States Code, provides in part that “appropriate incentives and recognition should be provided for excellence in performance.”

(b) Section 5301(a)(2) of title 5, United States Code, provides that “pay distinctions be maintained in keeping with work and performance distinctions.”

(c) Section 5338 of title 5, United States Code, provides that “The Office of Personnel Management may prescribe regulations necessary for the administration” of General Schedule pay rates, including within-grade increases.

(d) Section 4 of the Performance Management and Recognition System Termination Act of 1993 (Pub. L. 103–89) provides that “the Office of Personnel Management shall prescribe regulations necessary for the administration of this section.”

[51 FR 8419, Mar. 11, 1986, as amended at 59 FR 40793, Aug. 10, 1994; 60 FR 33098, June 27, 1995]

§ 531.402 Employee coverage.

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (b) of this section, this subpart applies to employees who—

(1) Are classified and paid under the General Schedule;

(2) Occupy permanent positions; and

(3) Are paid less than the maximum rate of their grade.

(b) This subpart does not apply to any employee who is appointed by the President, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate.

[70 FR 31301, May 31, 2005]

§ 531.403 Definitions.

In this subpart:

Acceptable level of competence means performance by an employee that warrants advancement of the employee's rate of basic pay to the next higher step of the grade or the next higher rate within the grade (as defined in this section) of his or her position, subject to the requirements of § 531.404 of this subpart, as determined by the head of the agency (or designee).

Agency means an agency with employees covered by this subpart, as provided in § 531.402.

Calendar week means a period of any seven consecutive calendar days.

Critical element has the meaning given that term in § 430.203 of this chapter.

Employee has the meaning given that term in 5 U.S.C. 2105, except that for the purpose of applying the provisions regarding equivalent increases and creditable service with respect to non-GS service, *employee* also includes—

(1) An individual employed by the U.S. Postal Service or the Postal Rate Commission who would be considered an employee under 5 U.S.C. 2105 but for the exclusion in section 2105(e); and

(2) An individual employed by a non-appropriated fund instrumentality for service that is creditable under § 531.406(b)(4).

Equivalent increase means an increase in an employee's rate of basic pay, or an opportunity for such an increase under a non-GS pay system, as described in § 531.407.

Next higher rate within the grade for a GM employee means the rate of basic pay that exceeds the employee's existing rate of basic pay by one within-grade increase, not to exceed the maximum rate of the grade. For the purpose of this definition, a within-grade increase equals the dollar value of the GS within-grade increase for the applicable grade (excluding any locality payment, special rate supplement, or any other additional payment).

General Schedule or *GS* means the classification and pay system established under 5 U.S.C. chapter 51 and subchapter III of chapter 53. The term also refers to the pay schedule of GS rates established under 5 U.S.C. 5332, as adjusted under 5 U.S.C. 5303 or other law (including GS rates payable to GM employees). Law enforcement officers receiving LEO special base rates are covered by the GS classification and pay system, but receive higher base rates of pay in lieu of GS rates at grades GS–3 through GS–10.

GM employee has the meaning given that term in 5 CFR 531.203.

GS rate means a rate of basic pay within the General Schedule, excluding additional pay of any kind such as locality payments under subpart F of this part and special rate supplements under 5 CFR part 530, subpart C, or 38